Prevalence of Sexual Intercourse Decreased

●   A final area of improvement in health risk for high school students is associated with declining pregnancy rates among Tennessee teenagers over the past 6 to 7 years. The percentages of students reporting ever having engaged in sexual intercourse have declined from 62% in 1993 and 61% in 1995 to 53% in 1997.

Comparison with Birth and Death Data for Adolescents

●   If these trends are practically significant, they should be accompanied by decreasing pregnancy and birth rates among high school age females, as well as decreased suicides and homicides among males and females in the high school age-group (13-19).

●   Adolescent (13-19) birth rates have indeed declined from 1990 to 1996 from 53.7 per 1,000 to 48.2 per 1,000, a decrease of 10%.

●   Also, from 1990 to 1996, youth suicide rates declined by 16%, from 9.3 to 7.8 per 100,000 among youth aged 13-19.

●   However, far from falling, homicide rates among youth ages 13-19 have risen in Tennessee, from 9.5 in 1990 to 13.7 in 1996, a 44% increase.

Source: YRBSS 1991, 1993, 1995, 1997.

Increased Health Risks for High School Students in the YRBSS for 1991-1997

●   Use of certain drugs, especially marijuana, cigarettes and crack/cocaine, has increased in the 1990's.

●   Increased marijuana use is the most striking upward trend in health risks among high school students in Tennessee and in the United States. Lifetime use of marijuana has increased from 33% of students in 1993 to 40% of students in 1995 and 46% of students in 1997 - an increase of about 39% in 6 years.

●   Use of marijuana in the 30 days prior to the survey has also increased dramatically from about 14% in 1991 to 28% in 1997, a two-fold increase. The increase has been incremental in each two-year survey interval.

●   Age at first use of marijuana has also declined (see also **Tennessee Health Status Report, 1997**).

●   Cigarette smoking in the past 30 days has increased from 30% of students in 1991 to 39% in 1997, a 30% increase. However, the percentage of lifetime smokers has